

Dimensions

A publication for the Employees and Friends of VASDHS

June - July 2006

VASDHS launches Employee Wellness Program

"He who has health has hope, and he who has hope has everything."

- Arabian Proverb

Over the past 18 months, VASDHS launched the Employee Wellness Program to promote the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual fitness of all VASDHS employees. The program was created by the Employee Wellness Committee (EWC) to coordinate and facilitate ongoing wellness activities. "We want to encourage all employees to adopt healthy lifestyle habits so they feel good and are enjoying their life," said Gary Rossio, VA San Diego Healthcare System director. "We recognize the benefit of a healthy workforce and are committed to providing a positive atmosphere for the promotion of health, safety, and wellness for all employees," Rossio noted. "We've had a good turnout for our events and many employees say they are enjoying the programs and are feeling better," said Dan Jones, chair of the EWC.

The EWC has coordinated a variety of programs to meet the needs of our employees. They show-

cased those programs at the Employee Wellness Fair on March 28th - 450 employees attended. Some of the most popular activities offered are Rapid Relaxation with Mantram Repetition, Stress Management, Walk-n-Roll, Lunchtime Relaxation, Smoking Cessation, and the on-site fitness room, just to name a few. Recently, VASDHS Employee Wellness announced its partnership with two local fitness centers, 24-Hour Fitness and LA Fitness to offer employees new club memberships at discounted rates. In addition, 24-hour Fitness donated two weight machines to our facility. Another great EWC accomplishment is the implementation of the Employee Wellness Incentive Program where employees log their activities, earn points, and subsequently earn awards when achieving corresponding milestones.

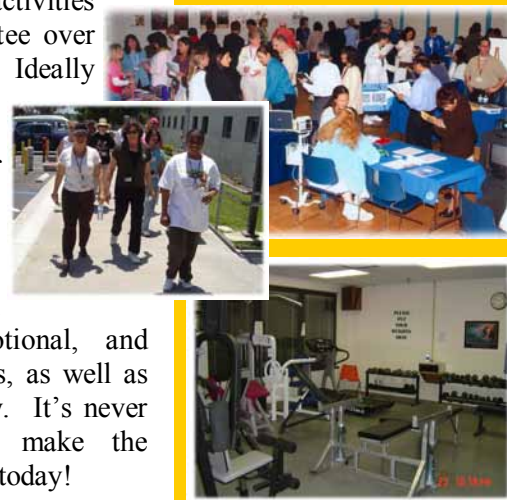
As Americans, we need to make changes to improve our health. Two thirds of American's are overweight to obese. Obesity can lead to serious consequences including hypertension, high cholesterol levels, liver disease, and type 2 diabetes. Most

Americans lead a sedentary lifestyle and few meet the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports recommended exercise target of a minimum of 20 minutes of exercise, at least three times per week. Effectively managing stress is another important component of wellness. We hope these work place wellness programs will encourage more employees to get active and stay healthy. For more information, see the webpage: <http://vaww.san-diego.med.va.gov/EmployeeWellness/index.htm>

The EWC plans to continue to evaluate and develop new programs to meet our employee's needs. Feedback from the recent Employee Wellness Needs Assessment Survey, will steer the activities of the committee over the next year. Ideally we'll continue to expand the number of opportunities available to improve and maintain physical, emotional, and spiritual fitness, as well as personal safety. It's never too soon to make the change. Start today!

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Diversity in the Workplace

by Marlene Carvajal

The VA San Diego Healthcare System's leadership recognizes that success and maintaining a competitive advantage is based on the ability to draw on the most important resource – the skills of the workforce. An organization that promotes and achieves a diverse workplace will attract and retain quality employees and increase customer loyalty. VASDHS actively participates in the VISN 22 Diversity Committee. This team, together with the VASDHS Special Emphasis Programs (SEP's), has enhanced diversity awareness, and have sponsored many educational training events that are designed to improve knowledge, skills, and job performance.

As of March 2006, VASDHS employed 2,410 individuals. This organization's staff is very diverse with:

% EMPLOYED	CATEGORIES
22%	White Males
31%	White Females
6%	Black or African-American Males
4%	Black or African-American Females
4.5%	Hispanic Males
3.5%	Hispanic Females
14.5%	Asian-American/Pacific-Islander Males
13.5%	Asian-American/Pacific-Islander Females
0.5%	American-Indian Males
0.5%	American-Indian Females



Nuts and Health

by Stella Carlos, Dietetic Intern

Epidemiological studies suggest that including nuts as part of a balanced diet may help prevent cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and help with weight control. Nuts contain omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants, phytochemicals, fiber, protein, vitamins, and minerals. These nutrients play an important role in the prevention of chronic disease.

The effect of nuts on weight control is attributed to the satiety (feeling of fullness) effect of moderate unsaturated fat consumption. While nuts are healthy, they should be eaten in moderation due to the fat content. Recommended serving is one ounce per day (example: almonds ~24; cashews ~18; pecans ~20 halves).



Source: <http://www.nuthealth.org/nutrition.php3?action=reference>

Integrated Ethics: Goals of Preventive Ethics

by Sharon De Peralta

Throughout our health care system, patients and health care professionals must make difficult, potentially life-altering decisions every day. Making decisions like these can stir up controversy or cause us to re-examine our fundamental values and beliefs. In the business of health care, ethics concerns - that is, uncertainties or conflicts about values - inevitably arise. Effectively responding to ethics concerns is essential to high quality patient care. Unresolved ethics concerns can lead to errors or unnecessary and potentially costly delays in care decisions, and thus can be bad for patients, providers and the organization.

The overall goal of preventive ethics is to **improve health care quality by identifying, prioritizing, and addressing health care ethics issues on a systems level**. The more specific aim is to produce measurable improvements in the organization's ethical health care practices by implementing systems-level changes that reduce gaps in ethics quality - that is, to reduce

disparities between the organization's current practices and best practices with respect to ethics issues. Preventive ethics activities may include:

- redesigning work processes
- implementing checklists, reminders, and decision support
- evaluating organizational performance with respect to ethical health care practices
- developing policies and protocols that promote ethical health care practices
- designing education for patients and/or staff to address system-wide knowledge deficits
- offering incentives and rewards to motivate and acknowledge ethical health care practices among staff

Read the next Quality Review Newsletter which will describe ISSUES - a practical, systematic approach to preventive ethics.

Cinco de Mayo Celebration



Yolanda Castro and Dulce Engberg

VASDHS celebrated Cinco de Mayo on May 5, 2006, in the multipurpose room. The Hispanic Employment Program provided authentic Mexican recipes, Hispanic music, and the all-time favorite nachos with cheese and jalapenos. Over 250 employees attended this event.

Research Week



Dr. Paul (Pengzhe) Lu, explains to Dr. Rosenzweig and Lori Graham his research findings of axonal regeneration in chronic injury to spinal cord.

VASDHS Research Service sponsored the 2nd Annual Poster Day event on May 4, 2006, at Multipurpose Room. This event was held in observance of National VA Research Week. Thanks to all who participated.

Partnership for Safety through Communication Fair



The Partnership for Safety through Communication Fair was held on May 15, 2006 to promote resources for healthy communication between staff and patients to build a safe and healthy VA community.

Take Your Child to Work Day

On April 27, 2006, the Federal Women's Program sponsored the Take Your Child to Work Day event - 36 children participated. The program included a facility tour and educational activities from various services such as Police and Security, Nutrition and Food Service, Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, Safety Section, ITS, and Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service. Special thanks to everyone that volunteered their time for this event.



Don't Think Trash, Think Cash... Recycle today!

by Jean Parkinson



Recycling is an important part of the solution

to conserve energy and protect the environment. The more we recycle, the less garbage winds up in our landfills. By reusing aluminum, paper, glass, plastics, and other materials, we can save production and energy costs, and reduce the negative impacts that the extraction and processing of virgin materials has on the environment. We can also support the services provided to our Veterans by recycling our aluminum cans and deposit containers.

To increase recycling of aluminum cans and plastic deposit containers at the VA San Diego Healthcare System, Facilities Management Service has installed recycling bins on each floor by the service elevators. Flyers and posters are placed on each floor regarding the recycling program, and the status of the quantity collected on each floor will also be published semi-annually. All aluminum cans and deposit containers are collected and donated to the Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service for their programs for the Veterans. The market for aluminum cans is currently at \$1.30 per pound, and plastic deposit containers are at 7 cents per pound.

"Try not to become a man of success but rather to become a man of value"

- Albert Einstein

Awards & Recognition

VA Honors San Diego Nurse during National Nurses Week

San Diego resident Kathleen Ober, RN, PhD, FNP-BC was honored May 9, 2005 in Washington, D.C., with the Secretary's Award for Excellence from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for being the top registered nurse, in an extended role, in the Department's health care. VA operates the largest integrated medical system in the country. Last year, VA's nearly 60,000 nurses cared for patients in almost 600,000 hospitalizations and 55 million outpatient visits.



(l-r) VA Deputy Secretary Gordon Mansfield, Kathy Ober, RN, PhD, FNP-BC, Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management William Feeley, and VA's Chief Nursing Officer Cathy Rick, RN, CNAA, CHE

VASDHS is a Winner! - Federal Electronics Reuse and Recycling Challenge (FERRC)

The VA San Diego Healthcare System has just been named a winner in the FERRC as well in the large facility category - West Coast Region. Other VA medical centers award recipients were Pittsburgh, PA and Beckley, WV. The GEMS (Green Environmental Management System) was implemented last year to enhance and improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of environmental programs, to meet both requirements of the ISO 14001 and the guidance provided by the Veterans Health Administration.

VASDHS has donated (as of

March 2006) an estimated 17,095 lbs. of reused electronics: 260 CPU's; 361 LCD monitors and 210 peripherals to schools, nonprofit organizations and other government agencies such as the Border Patrol, for educational purposes, per Executive Order #12999. The non-working electronics are recycled with contract sources. Randy Ritter, VASDHS Chief of Facilities Management Service received the award on behalf of our facility at a ceremony on Friday, April 21, 2006 at 11:00 a.m. in the White House Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

National Police Week



In observance of National Police Week (May 19 – 13, 2006), Police Service hosted a ceremony and barbeque lunch to VASDHS staff on May 19, 2006, in the Rose Garden.

FROM THE STAFF

Dimensions is a bimonthly publication of the VA San Diego Healthcare System. Your suggestions, contributions, and photos are most welcome. Submissions for the August - September 2006 issue are due July 6, 2006

Gary J. Rossio, CHE,
Director
Vacant
Associate Director
Jacqueline G. Parthemore, MD
Chief of Staff
Janet M. Jones, RN, Ed. D.
ACOS/Nursing & PCS

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Volunteer Recognition Week



(l-r) Gary Rossio, Genevieve Lamb, and Jacqueline Parthemore

The annual VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) Awards banquet was held on April 18, 2006. Genevieve Lamb received the highest award for 37,500 hours of service. She has served in several areas but currently works in the Human Resources office. We thank the volunteers and look forward to continuing this excellent relationship in the years to come.